

CG e-Campus News

Coast Guard Institute

The Coast Guard Institute's Campus News has been reformatted for on-line distribution only. The publication now is updated regularly with timely issues, as opposed to the previous hard-copy bimonthly publication. Check back regularly for updated material.

The CG e-Campus News is designed to keep you informed on education- and advancement-related issues. The publication includes links to non-Coast Guard sites, which are provided as a customer service and do not represent any implicit or explicit endorsement by the United States Coast Guard of any commercial or private issues or products presented there.

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Education: Avoiding the Diploma Mills

The Big Rip-off

Are you looking for the "right school" to meet your needs? Does the thought of an easy "no hassle" college degree with no Transcript or Student Evaluation Processes scare you? Well maybe it should. Because that is the hook used by many unaccredited "colleges" (often called "diploma mills"). These diploma mills love to prey on military servicemembers.

What is a diploma mill?

A diploma mill is an institution of higher education operating without supervision of a state or professional agency, granting diplomas that are either fraudulent or, because of the lack of proper standards, worthless.

Some are simple frauds: just a P.O. box where people send money in exchange for a piece of paper purported to be a college degree. Others require nominal work from the student, but do not require college-level course work that is normally required for a degree.

What is wrong with a diploma mill?

Overall, diploma mills devalue college degrees by making them available without college-level work. This makes all degrees suspect and confuses

Coast Guard college audio/visual program

Are you interested in obtaining college credits without stepping foot in a college classroom? If so, this program is for you.

Brown Bag University is a very effective voluntary education program in helping service members earn college credits. The program combines the ease of the distant education venue along with the classroom setting of a traditional college course. The program is easy to set up and requires little additional work. The local unit sponsors a course, allowing the members to take the course during their lunch break. The members usually bring their lunch while they review and discuss the course material.

How do you set up a Brown Bag University ? The following steps are tips to ensure the unit's success in establishing a sound educational program.

- **STEP 1:**
Select a course that interests several people at the unit (for a listing of all courses available, review the listing on the Institute's homepage <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/manuals/sgs/sgs.pdf> . When deciding on a course, remember that some courses are in greater demand than others, such as the General CLEP courses, and that some courses are considerably more difficult than others, such as the *Ethics in America* course. Plan wisely.
- **STEP 2:**
Order the course by completed College Audio/Visual Order Form, found on the above link. If you write " Brown Bag University " at the top of the form, you will be allowed to retain the videos longer than the allotted time frame.
- **STEP 3:**
Order textbooks and study guides. Students may be asked to assume the costs or the command may elect to purchase the books.
- **STEP 4:**
Obtain a copy of the practice test or study guide for the test. The DANTES test control officer or the education services officer should have a set of the practice tests.
- **STEP 5:**
Select a facilitator (or someone who has background in the subject being taught) to lead the class. The facilitator can make a big difference in the way the course is viewed.
- **STEP 6:**
Schedule a time and location (with TV and VCR). Classroom-style seating or a conference room is fine. An hour to an hour and a half is recommended.
- **STEP 7:**
The facilitator should review the first few lessons of the course and the practice test. Facilitators should pay close attention to the practice test and ensure that material covered on the test is addressed in class. The facilitator may wish to purchase the instructor's guide, if it is available.
- **STEP 8:**
For the format of the class, we recommend showing the video portion for the first hour and use the remainder of the time with the facilitator leading the class discussion.
- **STEP 9:**
Make arrangements for students to take the course examination. About a month before the end of the class, determine who will administer the examination and make arrangements for the DANTES test control officer to order exams form the contractor. If you need help in locating the nearest DANTES test control officer contact Steve Jerrim at (405) 954-1106 or visit the DANTES web site at www.voled.doded.mil.

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the requirements of the degree plan reducing the overall number of courses left to achieve. All degree plans will require basic general education courses that can be best earned through examination credit or traditional college credit (free with TA). While examination credit does not cost the member either, the cost of books and study guides rests with the member. Some educational centers have purchased the books and will loan them to members at no cost. Many units will set up brown bag sessions where they will work through a designated course using the video/audios. The video/audios stored at Tobyhanna are available to Coast Guard members free of charge and are a great way to introduce the reluctant student to college.

The SOCCOAST colleges have to be regionally accredited which prevents the member from becoming a victim of a diploma mill or not having credit transfer. SOCCOAST schools have already gone through a review process not only by SOC, but also by other SOCCOAST schools. SOCCOAST schools have to abide by certain standards and the SOCCOAST schools are bound to offer programs that you can take at a distance. The extensive review process SOCCOAST schools endure takes time, but when the plans receive final approval, they are added to AutoDP. An up-to-date list on the Institute's web page will indicate the most recent listing of SOC colleges whose degree plans are in the database.

Upon deciding upon a degree plan and having a clear direction, you are once again encouraged to go through the Institute to enroll with one of the SOCCOAST colleges. If the college is not a SOCCOAST school, it is not necessary to enroll through the Institute; however, we will send official Coast Guard transcripts to all colleges. The enrollment package can be found by going to the web page of the selected college. This information is provided at the end of the degree plan that the Institute provides. Complete the enrollment form, provide any other official transcripts (in sealed envelopes), provide a transcript for examination credit prior to July 1994 (if the member has not sent the score reports to the Institute) and indicate the method of payment to the college. I recommend that you send the entire package with all the accompanying items at one time. If you pay by check, always staple your check to the enrollment form so the check won't be separated from the package during the processing time.

The official Coast Guard transcript will be sent to your selected college along with a Student Agreement and the degree plan. The official transcript is sent on safe-script paper. If you are listed on the global, you will be sent a link where you can print your own white copy of the transcript. The Student Agreement is the official contract between you and the school. If the school approves the plan, the school will sign and forward you a copy. If the college disagrees with an item on the Student Agreement, a revised copy can be obtained at that time. Once the Student Agreement is signed, the college cannot change the requirements listed on the agreement. The signed Student Agreement becomes a legal document. You do not have to continue with the college if you change your mind, but the school is bound to honor the document.

SOCCOAST colleges offer a number of side benefits that enhance their programs. Some SOCCOAST colleges will eliminate certain tests such as the GRE or G-MAT if you are in the military. In selected subject areas such as Health Services Technician, you are accepted into a nursing program because of your military rate and don't have to meet entrance requirements. The variety of educational opportunities runs the entire gamut from high school diplomas, certification programs, associate degrees, bachelor's degree, and graduate programs. We have something for every level of education. By going through the Institute to obtain an educational package and to enroll in a college, you benefit greatly. After all you can obtain a price break in the cost (if applicable), a legal contract binding the college to the hours required (Student Agreement), an official transcript, a concise plan of the hours, several different plans and choices, different modes of delivery, and the elimination of some required entry tests. So, why wouldn't you go through the Institute?

The process has become even easier to use because we only have two forms: Application for Voluntary Education services (CGI-1561) and Official USCG Transcript (CGI-1564). The first form begins the entire process (It includes assessment, updates, degree plans, CPOA) and the second form is sent when you want the official transcript sent to a college. Both the address and fax number are included on the forms and both forms are available on the Institute's web page.

USCG Institute (VE)

5900 SW 64th Street, Room 235 MPB

Oklahoma City, OK 73169-6990

For additional questions, you may e-mail the edadviser at VE@cginstitute.uscg.mil. You are also welcomed to contact the education adviser who completed your package and degree plan. The education advisers from the College Degree Branch are listed for your convenience:

Sue Riley, Head of College Degree Branch (405) 954-7241

Vacant, Educational Counselor (405) 954-7209

Steve Jerrim, Educational Counselor (405) 954-1106

Charles Morrison, Registrar (405) 954-7234

(Submitted by Sue Riley, Coast Guard Institute College Degree Branch)

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SAT/ACT preparation software offer

The Victory Sports Group (representing a group of professional football players at all levels - NFL, NFL Europe, AFL, and CFL) is making eKnowledge's \$199 SAT/ACT Standard Power Prep programs available to military personnel and their dependents for the cost of shipping and handling. (For more information, go to <http://sat.eknowledge.com/Default.asp>.)

The SAT/ACT test prep training programs are two separate, 2 CD-ROM sets, that includes more than ten (10) hours of training video and 25-40 hours of student participation. Each can be used as a stand-alone complete course or as a supplement to other prep materials. You select the training you most need and study at your own pace by picking which of the 120 video lessons to view. The program also provides detailed explanatory answers to practice questions and quizzes and has both electronic and paper based progress tracking and much more.

The VSG's sponsorship will last for the entire 2005-06 school year, which will end July 1, 2006. The programs that have been sponsored by VSG will time-out and not function after July 1, 2006. If you would like to use the program for another year, you will be able to renew your license for \$9.95 for another year. (You will access the website or contact eKnowledge by phone to renew the program for another year beyond the initial sponsorship. This is done to deter the resale of the \$199 programs.)

To take advantage of this offer, military personnel will be asked to provide name, SSN, and birthdate so military status can be verified. This is all done through the DoD, but should work since you're in DEERS. If it doesn't, please contact me. The on-line verification form is secure (i.e., the info you enter, including your SSN, is encrypted) and no data is maintained after verification has been sent to VSG (i.e., all personal information you've entered will be deleted).

The verification form is linked from the bottom of the MilitaryHOMEFRONT page on which the offer is described. Once your status has been verified, you'll be sent to a non-DoD web site to complete the process.

(submitted by Andrew Webb, TraCen Cape May ESO)

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Tuition assistance tips

Before you request tuition assistance for one or more college courses, read and heed these tips.

1. Talk with your ESO about your college and career goals. Even if you think you know what you're doing, you may pick a school or degree program that turns out not to be what you expected or wanted. Talking with your ESO can prevent that from happening.
2. Submit your TA request early. Did you know that the Coast Guard Institute prefers that you submit TA requests as soon as you know what courses you're going to be taking, all the way through the end of the current fiscal year? This allows the Institute staff to even out their workload and process requests quicker than is possible when they get the bulk of them just before the beginning of a semester.
3. Submit your TA request electronically. Rather than filling it out, printing it out, signing it, and sending/taking it to the ESO, complete and sign the form in Acrobat then e-mail it to the ESO. This ensures that your request is readable when it gets to the Institute, and avoids delays that occur if it's not readable. Here are the steps to complete the form through a web browser:
 - a. download the form to your computer or a disk
 - b. open Acrobat 6.0 Professional from the "Start" button in the bottom left corner of your screen
 - c. click the OPEN button and find the file you just downloaded
 - d. fill out the form, put your electronic signature on it, and SAVE AS
 - e. e-mail the completed form to the ESO

Do NOT use Adobe Reader 7.0 -- if you do, you won't be able to digitally sign the form or save the information you entered.

(submitted by Andrew Webb, TraCen Cape May ESO)

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To CLEP or Not to CLEP...

Most Coasties have heard the acronym CLEP before. But surprisingly few really understand what it means, as demonstrated by people asking me to take a CLEP Humanities course. CLEP stands for College Level Examination Program -- one of a number of examination programs you're eligible for that allows you to take one test and, if you pass, earn 3 to 12 college credits. The other programs are DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests) and ECE (Excelsior College Exams).

For people who are good at studying on their own, with no supervision, homework, quizzes, etc. these programs are a truly great way by which to earn college credit. I've administered 21 tests-for-credit this calendar year to about 5 people; 15 of the tests have gotten passing scores. But as good as these programs are I have a few cautions.

First, they're not for everyone. If you don't have the time, energy, or diligence to devote to studying for them you probably won't do very well. These tests are the equivalent of a college final exam - some of them cover two semesters worth of information. They are NOT easy.

The second caution assumes you want to take one of these tests because you, eventually, want to get a college degree. That being the case, before you decide to take one of these tests you should check with the college you plan to get your degree from. Not all colleges and universities accept credit earned through these programs. To check which schools accept CLEP tests, go to http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_clep/searchCLEPColleges.jsp. For schools that accept DSST scores, go to http://www.getcollegecredit.com/04learners_c.html. For schools accepting

ECE scores, go to https://www.excelsior.edu/portal/page?_pageid=57,83221&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

Third, not all schools that accept credit earned through these programs accept scores at full value. Your ESO has books listing many schools and how much credit each gives for each type of test. But it's probably best to ask your counselor at the school of your choice about specific tests you have in mind.

With these cautions in mind, you can better make the choice whether to take a CLEP test, DSST, or ECE.

(submitted by Andrew Webb, TraCen Cape May ESO)

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Foundation grant delays

For various technical and personnel reasons, Coast Guard Foundation grants to reimburse Coast Guard students for non-tuition education costs have not been processed for a number of months. However, funds are expected to be available in the near future to cover the backlog of requests (totaling about \$43,000) and new ones.

Please continue to submit your applications for reimbursement, but don't expect immediate reimbursement. As soon as the Institute receives funds, checks will be prepared and mailed to everyone who has a grant request pending.

(submitted by Andrew Webb, TraCen Cape May ESO)

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Education Opportunities – Enlisted and Officer

The following, from Dan Rogers (full-time ESO at Sector Key West), is a synopsis of recent messages announcing advanced education programs for officers and enlistees.

Master of Homeland Security degree – ALCOAST 075/06 describes a Master of Homeland Security (MHS) degree program, developed by the Office of Domestic Preparedness and the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). The purpose of this program is to develop future leaders for organizations responsible for homeland security. DEADLINE: 01 May 2006

International Affairs – ALCOAST 124/06 announces an opportunity to obtain a post graduate degree in International Affairs. DEADLINE: 26 May 2006

Army-Baylor University Graduate Program in Healthcare Administration – ALCOAST 159/06 describes the program for attaining a master's degree in healthcare administration. Applications are open to all CWO/MED (primary occupational field 19) and commissioned officers (O-2 through O-3). DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Medical Administration degree – ALCOAST 164/06 describes the program for attaining a bachelor's degree in Medical Administration (MA). You have to be in the HS rating, have at least six years total time of active service (with at least 2 years of Coast Guard service) be E-6 (or E-5 above the promotion cut-off). You should also be within one year of tour completion and not have a previous undergraduate degree. DEADLINE: 01 June 2006

Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence degree (officers) – ALCOAST 169/06 solicits officer applicants for a Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence (MSSI). There are 12 billets for officers in this intensive program. The targeted ranks are O-2 and O-3. O-1 applicants with previous relevant enlisted or civilian experience and O-4s with at least one tour in intelligence at the district level or above will also be competitive. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Intelligence degrees (enlistees) – ALCOAST 170/06 describes criteria for the bachelor of science in intelligence and master of science in strategic intelligence (MSSI) programs. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Joint Military Intelligence College Center for Strategic Intelligence Research (CSIR) Fellows Program – ALCOAST 171/06 describes this fellowship for officers. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence degree (part-time) – ALCOAST 172/06 describes the 2-year part-time Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence (MSSI) program. The target population for this program is E-5 through O-6 and GS-8 through GS-15 or equivalent.

Research Fellowship – ALCOAST 173/06 describes the National Security Agency (NSA) Director's Fellowship for officers. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Organizational Leadership degrees – ALCOAST 175/06 describes postgraduate programs for officers in the fields of leadership, organizational development, organizational behavior, industrial/organizational psychology, or human resources. Primary candidates are O-2s, O-3s and O-4s who will be tour complete in summer 2007. This area of study prepares officers for positions in the CG Leadership Development Program. If selected you will specialize in leadership, organizational development, organizational behavior, industrial/organizational psychology, or human resources and be

assigned according to your specialty. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Sloan Fellowship (MS in Management or MBA) – ALCOAST 176/06 is the Sloan Fellowship solicitation. One person will be selected to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and receive either a Master of Science degree in Management or a Master of Business Administration. Additional information is available on the web at <http://mitsloan.mit.edu/>. DEADLINE: 24 July 2006

Law School & Master of Law degrees – ALCOAST 180/06 describes opportunities for officers with bachelor's degrees to attend law school and those with JDs to obtain a Master of Law degree. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Naval/USMC Command and Staff Colleges and the Joint Advanced Warfare School – ALCOAST 183/06 is the ten month resident Command and Staff course at the Naval War College, Marine Corps University, and the Joint Advanced Warfare School, in Newport, RI. It provides military officers with a chance to study their profession in mid-career. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

MS in Project Management – ALCOAST 185/06 is a solicitation for postgraduate program applications for Master of Science in Project Management. Applicants should be O-4, O-4 select, or in the zone for O-4 summer 2005. Must be tour complete or have had at least two years at their current duty station by the class convening date of May 2007. Course will be taught at George Washington University, Washington, DC and is a balance of theory and practice in project management. DEADLINE: 20 May 2006

Financial Management/MBA – ALCOAST 186/06 describes the Financial Management/MBA program, open to LTJGs, LTs, LCDRs and CWOs selected for LT. It is an 18 month program. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Reserve Program Administrator (RPA) Advanced Education – ALCOAST 188/06 describes advanced education opportunities available for RPAs primarily in business and public administration, specializing in personnel, financial, and information technology. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

Engineering master's degrees – ALCOAST 189/06 describes six degree programs in the fields of chemical engineering, marine engineering technology, marine engineering and naval architecture, fire protection engineering, environmental management, and transportation management. DEADLINE: 19 May 2006

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Education assessments

To get an assessment of training you've received while in the Coast Guard (whether at CG or DoD schools), your first step should be to check DirectAccess to make sure all training you've undergone is listed there. If it's not, take course completion certificates to your SPO/PersRU and ask for the training that's not there to be entered into DirectAccess.

After that's done, complete and submit the Coast Guard Institute's new multi-purpose "Application for Voluntary Education Services" form via your ESO to the Coast Guard Institute. (If your ESO is hard to track down and if all the training you want assessed is in DirectAccess, you can use your digital signature on the form and e-mail it to me and I'll take care of it. Just send me an e-mail requesting the form; I'll send it to you with instructions.)

And if you'd like to see one or more degree plans (which will show you how many credits you have toward a given degree at various schools around the country), make sure you fill out section VII of the form. You don't need to specify a school, but you will need to list a major to get degree plans. If you don't list a major, the staff at the Institute will assume you'd like a degree that relates to your current rate.

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New TA Request Form

The Coast Guard Institute has just released a new "Application for Coast Guard Tuition Assistance". In addition to a number of minor changes, which take into account civilians and officers who apply, there's one especially important change, in the signature blocks (items 13 and 14).

It appears that the Coast Guard has been overpaying a number of schools you are attending, because students haven't entered the correct tuition on the application. Because of this, from now on your ESO will require you to provide information showing current tuition for the course(s) you're requesting TA for before signing and forwarding your request to the Institute. Proof of current tuition can be in the form of a print out of a web page, a copy of a current school course listing, or anything else that shows the per-credit tuition cost and something that indicates that cost related to your specific course(s).

The Institute has requested that unless it's absolutely necessary, TA requests should be prepared on your computer, digitally signed, and e-mailed to the Institute.

Finally, before you submit one of these new forms for the first time, please read the "Statement of Agreement/Understanding" on the second page. It's very important you understand not only what you're getting when you request TA but what you're obligating yourself to do. Reservists should pay especial attention to paragraph 6.

The form is currently available on the Institute's web site.

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Using the Acrobat forms – particularly the new TA form

For reasons known only to the people at Adobe (and, perhaps, to ITs), when you're filling out an Acrobat form, you should start with a never-used form, rather than recycle a previously used one – deleting previous info and inserting new info. When you recycle these forms, weird things happen and fixing them takes more time than typing everything from scratch on a blank form. It's especially problematic when you use a form someone else filled out and attached his/her digital signature to.

Also, after downloading the new TA form to your computer and opening it with Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Professional, you may see a pop-up window that says:

This is a copy of another PDF file that is already being tracked as part of an Email-Based Review.

Would you like to open the Tracked PDF and import any comments from this copy onto it, or just open this copy?

If you do see this pop-up, click "Open this Copy". I'm trying to find out why this message occurs and what we might do to prevent it. But for now, just use "Open this Copy".

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School Not Getting Reimbursed When You Use Tuition Assistance?

If your school's giving you fits for not getting reimbursed in a timely manner after you submit your tuition assistance authorization, please make sure they're doing the following.

First, have your Bursar (or whomever you submit your TA authorization to) make sure NETPDTC's name and address are in the "Bill to" section of the invoice. (These are printed at the bottom of the authorization.) If your or anyone else's name and address are there, rather than NETPDTC's, the invoice will not be processed.

Second, have your Bursar fax invoices to 850-452-1079.

The Institute will ensure that the right people get the right information to speed up invoice processing.

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Free SAT/ACT Software for Military Families

In association with the Department of Defense (DoD), eKnowledge LLC announces that a group of NFL, NFL Europe, AFL and CFL football players, represented through the Victory Sports Group Agency, is donating several million dollars worth of SAT and ACT test prep programs valued at \$199 each to families in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard for the school year 2005-2006. Through this sponsorship, active duty, National Guard, Reserve, and retired military personnel can obtain eKnowledge's \$199 SAT/ACT Standard Power Prep program(s) and the \$199 fee is waived. Families who request the program(s) pay only shipping & handling costs associated with the request. Servicemembers may request as many programs as they need for the students in their lives.

To facilitate ordering, DoD has created a secure website through its Military Homefront site (<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>) to quickly verify a person's military status before linking them to the software ordering site. You may access the verification and order pages by clicking here.

Programs ship to domestic U.S. addresses and APO addresses. The sponsorship covers the regular purchase price of \$199 and the family pays only the shipping and handling. The programs have a one-year license and are intended for the sole individual use of students on their personal home or laptop computer and are not intended for group or classroom instruction through the schools.

NMFA applauds this donation and the support shown by the players and the Victory Sports Group Agency for military families.

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The picture shows ISC Seattle Coast Guard Members, who are also City University students, hanging a new banner in the Learning Resource Center. This banner represents an expanding relationship between ISC Seattle and City University. City currently offers classes two days per week on site at ISC and will begin a four day program this upcoming fall term. Twenty five students are currently enrolled in Math 155 and the number is expected to double with the fall term expansion. City U has been on board at ISC Seattle since Winter Term 2006.



Sherman University

The CGC Sherman had some 40 students sign-up for college courses underway during the cutter's five-month deployment to Southeast Asia last summer. The crew call it "SHERMAN University." The crew's first week of class underway took place as the cutter sailed past the island of Midway. So there, in the center of the Pacific, thousands of miles from nowhere, where a great battle once raged, Coasties were cracking open their books, sharpening their pencils and preparing to learn English, math, business and science. At one point, the engineers had to postpone lighting off one of our very loud Main Gas Turbines for a few minutes until English class was completed. Growing pains. But, it's the right thing to do for our people -- and all are on board with this program. It probably doesn't hurt that the Captain is one of the instructors.

"Amazingly, I have perfect attendance at all of my classes," said CAPT Charley Diaz, the cutter's commanding officer.



These are the participants from the PAC Area ESO Symposium held in March in Alameda.

Campus News archives

[Have you ever...](#)

[Brown Bag University](#)

[Free associate degree](#)

Have you ever...

In Oklahoma, most folks drive pickup trucks. If you don't have one, then you probably want one, and I'm no exception... I've had my eye on those new '99 extended cab 4x4s. There's a local dealer that's selling those new extended cab pickups with a sticker price of \$28,000. I recently received in the mail a "special preferred customer voucher" from him; for \$21,000 off my next truck purchase.. a **75% off coupon!**

Good deal? Will I use it? Crazy not to?

Have you ever given much thought to the value of our Coast Guard education programs? Most are familiar with the Tuition Assistance, but did you know the CG Institute also provides: USCG Training Credit, College Courses (video/audio), College-Level Testing and Undergraduate Degree Planning, *-free?*

OK, that's nice- So what's the big deal?

The Coast Guard has come to realize how valuable education programs are to the workforce. A recent study by the Navy revealed that education benefits are the number one recruitment tool, and a major retention factor.

Did you know in the year 2005, the projection is that more than 58% of *all jobs* will require some college? Where do you intend to be in 5 short years? Still in the Coast Guard? Working in the family business? Playing in the band with Kevin Eubanks on the Tonight Show? (By the way, even Kevin went to Boston's Berklee College of Music.)

Quite a few Coast Guard members have taken steps to further their goals, but how are we doing in our overall quest for advanced education? These stats from the Institute's Voluntary Education show that so far in 1999 we've had about 1,967 participants in the tuition assistance program. Here's who used the program:

There were about 3,667 courses taken, and so far this year (for the first time), we've spent *over one million dollars* on tuition assistance! Here's surprise though... just slightly over 5% of eligible members took advantage of the program! If you're at a unit of 50 people, only 2 of you asked for the "**75% off coupon**" for your education goals!

In my 19 years of CG service, I've noticed not every opportunity lasts forever.. or at the very least they are subject to change. We are trying to maintain your education options, and frequently request more support to make education related money available. We're trying to keep the small print off your 'coupon' that says "offer expires in 90 days", or "good only at your local store", or "while supplies last".

I *wish* we all would get a truck coupon like that in the mail- but until then we should take advantage of the savings offered in other areas; like our education.

2005 is only a re-enlistment, or a PCS tour away.. Where will YOU be in a few years? You can't go wrong investing in your education, and quoting from a popular motivational speaker, "if not now, when?."

by LT Brad Wildon (retired)
Institute commanding officer, May 1999 to June 2001

Coast Guard college audio/visual program

Are you interested in obtaining college credits without stepping foot in a college classroom? If so, this program is for you.

Brown Bag University is a very effective voluntary education program in helping service members earn college credits. The program combines the ease of the distant education venue along with the classroom setting of a traditional college course. The program is easy to set up and requires little additional work. The local unit sponsors a course, allowing the members to take the course during their lunch break. The members usually bring their lunch while they review and discuss the course material.

How do you set up a Brown Bag University ? The following steps are tips to ensure the unit's success in establishing a sound educational program.

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Select a course that interests several people at the unit (for a listing of all courses available, review the listing on the Institute's homepage <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/manuals/sgs/sgs.pdf> . When deciding on a course, remember that some courses are in greater demand than others, such as the General CLEP courses, and that some courses are considerably more difficult than others, such as the *Ethics in America* course. Plan wisely.
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Obtain a copy of the practice test or study guide for the test. The DANTES test control officer or the education services officer should have a set of the practice tests.
- **STEP 5:**
Select a facilitator (or someone who has background in the subject being taught) to lead the class. The facilitator can make a big difference in the way the course is viewed.
- **STEP 6:**
Schedule a time and location (with TV and VCR). Classroom-style seating or a conference room is fine. An hour to an hour and a half is recommended.
- **STEP 7:**
The facilitator should review the first few lessons of the course and the practice test. Facilitators should pay close attention to the practice test and ensure that material covered on the test is addressed in class. The facilitator may wish to purchase the instructor's guide, if it is available.
- **STEP 8:**
For the format of the class, we recommend showing the video portion for the first hour and use the remainder of the time with the facilitator leading the class discussion.
- **STEP 9:**
Make arrangements for students to take the course examination. About a month before the end of the class, determine who will administer the examination and make arrangements for the DANTES test control officer to order exams form the contractor. If you need help in locating the nearest DANTES test control officer contact Steve Jerrim at (405) 954-1106 or visit the DANTES web site at www.voled.doded.mil.

Free associate degree

Don't read this unless you or someone you know is interested in obtaining a **FREE** Associate's Degree ... as my favorite Dixie Chick singer might say, "that's right, I said **free!**"

Here's the deal. Let's say you're a 3rd class petty officer on your first enlistment in the Coast Guard. After you make that Toyota payment and buy your mom's Christmas present, you lean your chair back against the wall thinking "gee I would sure like to be working on a degree, but I only have 9 bucks left this month." You'll need to earn 60 college credits. Here's how to do it -- and still have lunch money left over:

Just by being in the Coast Guard, you receive college credit. Plus, any time you complete an Institute correspondence course, go to a class "A" or "C" school, or make rate you earn additional college credit. All of these accomplishments are worth some college credit, (and are not only free, but you even got paid for showing up). Most of the credits received this way are applicable to your "free electives" when compiling degree credits. Example: You are a member who has completed Basic Training and YN "A" School, you have completed the MRNPO and have recently been promoted to YN3. Because of these accomplishments, you have earned **19 college credits ...** so only 41 to go.

Another way to earn college credits is to take and complete the five CLEP general exams (at no cost to you). These tests are designed to test your knowledge in English, humanities, math, science, and social science and history. Each test is worth six college credits. These credits constitute the core of the degree. Hey, I didn't say you won't have to study! If you pass each one of the tests, you will have earned an additional **30 college credits ...** now you only need 11 more.

Based on your scenario, all you are lacking for your associate's degree are four liberal arts credits, four free electives and three credits for an English essay assignment.

To complete the liberal arts and free electives portion, you will need to complete two CLEP subject or two DANTES tests in any subject, and complete the MRNSPO (all free for you to take). This will give you **eight credits**, which will complete those requirements.

For the **last three credits**, you are ready to enroll with the University of Phoenix to complete your degree. The only thing between you and that degree is an English essay, which you should be able to pass with no problem. **There's your 60 credits ... done.**

Now comes the money part of this degree:

Once you enroll with the University of Phoenix and enroll in the English essay course, the cost is \$570. Apply for tuition assistance through the Coast Guard Institute for this English essay and save yourself \$371.25, which leaves you owing \$198.75 for your course. You will need to pay this to the University of Phoenix, but once you have, you can apply for a reimbursement through the Coast Guard Foundation Grant -- and receive your \$198.75 fee back.

So you see? An associate's degree at no cost to you. Plus you still have 9 bucks left to take your ESO to Burger USA for lunch, in appreciation for helping you order your tests. What are you waiting for? Go see your ESO!

by LT Brad Wildon (retired)
Institute commanding officer, May 1999 to June 2001